
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SB 6874

Brief Description: Regarding the Columbia river water delivery account.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Rockefeller, Kauffman and Rasmussen; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Columbia River Water Delivery Account in fulfillment of agreements between Washington State and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Nation and between Washington State and the Spokane Tribe of Indians regarding the release of water from Lake Roosevelt.

Hearing Date: February 20, 2008

Staff: Colleen Kerr (786-7168).

Background:

In 2006, the Legislature enacted the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Act relating to water resource management in the Columbia River basin. A priority of this act is the development of new water supplies that includes storage and conservation for the economic and community development needs of people, as well as the instream flow needs of fish.

Lake Roosevelt is the reservoir covering 130 square miles, created by the impoundment of the Columbia River by Grand Coulee Dam. The reservations of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Nation and the Spokane Tribe of Indians include large portions of Lake Roosevelt; and Grand Coulee Dam is within the Colville Reservation.

Summary of Bill:

Agreements Between Washington State and the Tribes

The Governor and the Legislature are in agreement with the Confederated Tribes of the

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Colville Nation and the Spokane Tribe of Indians to jointly support the additional releases of water from Lake Roosevelt by the Bureau of Reclamation. Because the tribes have a sovereign and proprietary interest in Lake Roosevelt water levels, the state intends to share a portion of the benefits derived from the water releases with the tribes to mitigate for any impacts caused by the releases. The water releases will be of approximately 82,500 acre feet of water and increase to no more than 132,000 feet of water in drought years.

The new releases of water from Lake Roosevelt will provide:

- new surface water supplies for farmers to replace diminishing ground water supplies in the Odessa aquifer;
- new water for municipalities with pending water right applications;
- enhanced certainty for agricultural water users with interruptible water rights during times of drought; and
- increase instream flows for fish.

Columbia River Water Delivery Account

The Columbia River Water Delivery Account (Account) is created in the State Treasury. Funds appropriated from the Account are provided pursuant to the agreement between the State of Washington and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Nation (Colville Nation) and the Spokane Tribe of Indians to support additional releases of water from Lake Roosevelt. The State Treasurer shall transfer funds from the General Fund on July 1, 2008, and on each July 1 thereafter in amounts to satisfy the following provisions:

- On July 1, 2008, \$3,775,000 shall be distributed to the Colville Nation. On July 1, 2009, \$3,625,000 shall be distributed to the Colville Nation. Each July 1 thereafter for the duration of the agreement, an amount equal to the previous year's distribution as adjusted for inflation shall be distributed to the Colville Nation.
- On July 1, 2008, \$2,250,000 shall be distributed to the Spokane Tribe of Indians. Each July 1 thereafter for the duration of the agreement, an amount equal to the previous year's distribution as adjusted for inflation shall be distributed to the Spokane Tribe of Indians.

Amounts may not be distributed from the Account unless the Director of Ecology (DOE) has certified in writing to the State Treasurer that the agreement is still in effect.

Provisions Regarding Affected Counties

Because the potential impacts of these water releases to affected counties are unknown, the DOE is directed to:

- conduct an assessment of the potential impacts, including recommendations for mitigation, and report to appropriate committees of the Legislature by November 15, 2007;
- establish processes for identifying and reporting on future impacts on the affected counties, and for making recommendations for mitigation; and
- aggressively pursue the development of new water supplies in affected counties to benefit both instream and out-of-stream uses.

"Affected counties" means those counties east of the crest of the Cascade mountains with an international border, or those counties east of the crest of the Cascade mountains that border both a county with an international border and a county with 400,000 or more residents.

Appropriation:

\$2,000,000 to the Department of Ecology for local governments.

\$150,000 to the Department of Ecology for independent analysis.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.